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UPCOMING EVENTS

⇨ **Black Rose Anarchist Library and Bookshop :: 22 Enmore rd, Newtown**

wednesday april 14: Dealing with cops and court: legal knowledge and know-how for everyone. 6:30pm

sunday april 18: black and re(a)d reading group. 2pm. check out blackandread.wordpress.com for this month's readings!

sunday april 25: anti-war film night! 6:30pm

⇨ **Label Free Picnic :: Camperdown Park, Newtown**

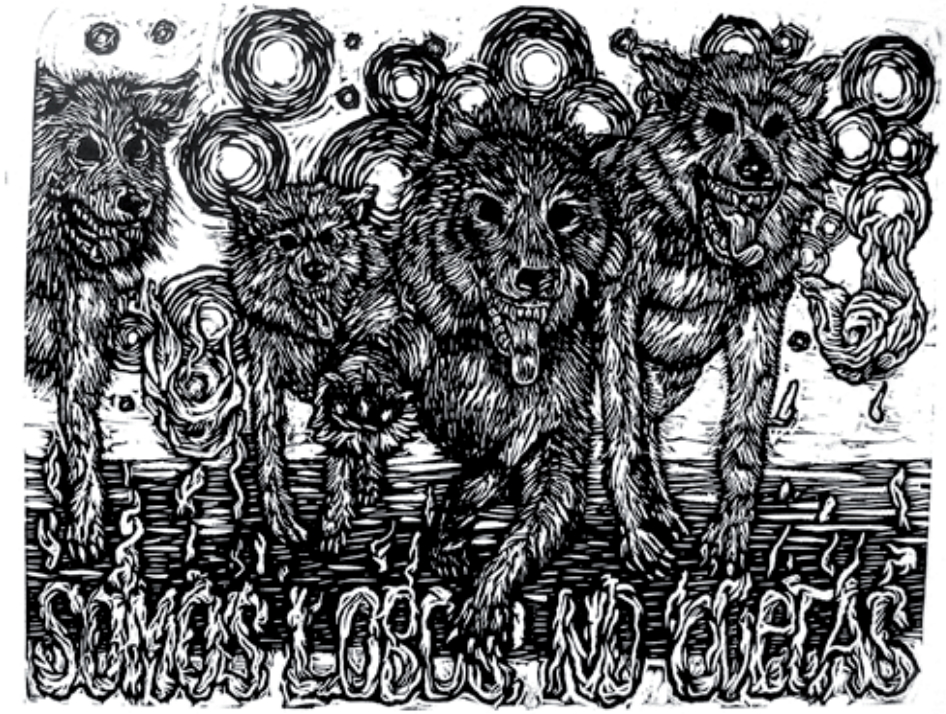
monday april 26: workshops, music, food! 11am-4pm. A celebration of sex and gender diverse folks! A space to build and create networks! Organised by STILL FIERCE: Sydney Sex and Gender Diverse Collective

⇨ **Jura Books :: 440 Parramatta rd, Petersham.**

friday april 16: Indie folk night with Post Paint and friends + live projections! 7pm

⇨ **TuTu Community Queer Space :: 22 Enmore rd, Newtown.**

friday april 23: Pervy Dinner Party! 6pm. trailer trash theme, frundsraier for schwarzer kanal queer wagon place



(we are wolves, not sheep)

MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

ISSUE #49 - APRIL 2010

MUTINY ZINE'S
4TH BIRTHDAY!
PRO-REVOLUTIONARIES & TRADE UNIONS
A SALUTATION TO LAMBROS
AFTER APEC: POLICING PROTESTS OF MAJOR EVENTS IN NSW
MY JOURNEY TO GETTING A 'SEX NOT SPECIFIED' LEGAL DOCUMENT

FREE ZINE!

Mutiny

is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We started this zine to explore different avenues of disobediance & resistance, & to encourage people to write about their ideas, actions & experiences.

An image from the recent blockade of the worlds biggest coal port in Newcastle

We meet regularly, please contact us on the address below:

mail: c/- PO Box 4, Enmore, NSW 2042, Australia
email: mutineers@graffiti.net
web: back issues at www.jura.org.au/mutiny

Editors for this month: Max Solidarity, Brassy F. Gnoll, Cynical Smurf, Phoenix, Graf Cat, Mambutu Nizwa, Syzygy, Dumpstered Twin

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

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review...

Mass Effect 2 (video game)
by Syzygy and Max Solidarity

Mass Effect 2 is an incredibly popular sci-fi action/roleplaying game. For its combination of immersive, cinematic atmosphere and fun action, it has received gushing praise from the gaming press. Time Magazine has chipped in on the act, describing it as "The Avatar of video games, but better written".

We wrote this review because it attempts to engage with political themes. While not the first video game to approach such issues, it is an important contribution to a new trend. The representation of gender and sexuality is especially interesting.

Unfortunately, the physical representation of the characters is heavily rooted in a gender binary, with the oh-so common depiction of women having highly sexualised bodies whereas men often have functionalist costumes, however, with heavy armour. Contrary to this, the gender of the characters does not define their ability, nor do their personality traits mirror gender stereotypes. There is a varied depiction of culture and class: male and female characters are in all kinds of work from cooks to domestic aides to mercenaries and mechanics. Notably, there is also a challenge to heteronormativity, in that the main characters of the game are almost all bisexual.

We loved the depiction of the anarcho-capitalist world of Illium. On the surface it appears to be luxurious and high-tech, populated by urbane sophisticates, totally different from the war-torn environments that you have previously explored. Its essence however, is demonstrated by voice-over announcements declaring, for instance, "Are you tired of losing your employees to competitors? Contact Indenturtech..." Class divisions are portrayed with cleaners working in shit conditions juxtaposed with corporate entrepreneurs living in luscious apartments.

Mass Effect 2 also attempts to portray morally complex choices, rather than the standard dichotomy between good and evil. Although allowing for choice is basically a more sophisticated version of those Choose Your Own Adventure books from when you were a kid, the video game medium seems ideally suited to use these device well and here it is executed magnificently.

It's definitely good that it's a dark and messy world, rather than populated with idealised stereotypes (and it improves on the first game in this respect). The Cerberus corporation, funded by a shady businessman that propagates an ultra-nationalist pro-human ideology is particularly intriguing. Problematically, however, 'moral complexity' can be used to justify decisions with conservative implications; like when you have a choice to destroy a cure to an incredibly virulent disease. Machiavellian decisions can't be understood just as choices that an individual makes (like in the game), but have to be viewed within the context of capital and class antagonism (as in real life; when say, ruthlessness might be useful in a context of revolutionary upheaval, but be horrific when its linked to imperialism or capital accumulation).

We had an awesome time playing Mass Effect 2, and it's good that in a burgeoning industry that consumes long parts of peoples' lives, baby steps towards a more politicised experience have been taken. It's important though that this be seen as tentative, flawed progress, rather than the culmination of a project.

Mutiny Zine is celebrating its fourth birthday. That's right, we've been producing a paper of anarchistic ideas and actions every month for THAT long! Join us, let your hair down, tie it up, or shave it off, just make sure you clean up after yourself.

BLACK ROSE LIBRARY
(22 Enmore Rd, Newtown)
7pm FRIDAY 21st May

PLUS design a cover for our 50th issue, and you could win a super secret awesome prize. Send your designs to mutineers(at)graffiti(dot)net. Everyone's a winner (and all that), but only one will be on the 50th issue cover!

obituary. They are far away from and hostile to any attempt to mythologizing, ownership, engaging or disengaging, against the mud slung and the depreciation, which authority is already trying to spread after the disclosure of the identity and photograph of a dead "terrorist" following a gunfight with cops in Daphne. Lambros Fountas, who fell dead in a shootout with the crew of the police squad car in the area of Daphne is known for his anarchist activities. Dromi Tis Orgis (Streets of Rage)

From his years as a high school student he was socially active and would later join the anarchist group MAVRO AGATHI (Black Thorn), who issued the DROMI TIS ORGIS (Streets of Rage) zine/ pamphlet/serial. He was active and participated in marches, rallies, social conflicts, demonstrations, flyering, discussions and social events.

He was one of the thousands of young people not enrolled at the time with any political youth party involved in the student occupations, demonstrations and clashes prior to and after the murder of Professor N. Temponera in Patras. Those young people were inspired by the insurrectional events of January 1991 as well as anarchist ideas and practices that they appropriated with a vitality which words are incapable of describing. The anarchist group Black Thorn, until its dissolution, participated in the Co-operation of Anarchist Groups & Individuals for Social Solidarity and Diverse Action.

During the occupation of the Polytechnical University of Athens in 1995 for the anniversary of the 1973 Uprising, Lambros Fountas was among the 504 who were arrested by the repressive state forces that invaded the university grounds on the morning of November 18th. He was, therefore, among so many young people of a generation that the politically

"Lambros is one of us"

correct were quick to describe as lost. Among all those who chose their partners' hand and travelled the 1990s from protest to protest, from roadblock to roadblock, standing in solidarity with passion in every social aspect, who chose to confront power with their rights and their wrongs, their differences amongst themselves and their stubbornness, confounding the authority that wanted them to simply be passersby in the social struggles. Not that there weren't any such people. Quite the contrary. Since then we had met up with Lambros and been side by side many times in marches, roadblocks and clashes.

We solemnly believe that what the people who fight leave behind, is what they really contribute and is not superficial to the liberation process from the shackles of oppression and exploitation. This is a legacy that transcends any needs, decisions and choices.

Because the means are not an end in themselves and don't differentiate those fighting, but rather reveal possibilities, they don't sanctify those who choose one or another form, nor do they put anyone on a pedestal. There are no unknown comrades who have been unfairly lost. Nor is the point principally, in these situations, the search for operational errors.

Equally, however, we do not agree with the logic that explanations are the privilege of priests, initiates or those well-educated in internal affairs or with those who deal with cases and craft scenarios all the time, that the answer may begin and end with motto: loss is a necessary evil. Our position must be straightforward and outspoken.

We close, saying goodbye to Lambros with an Indian wish (and certainty):"The next time (we meet) will be better!"

ANARCHIST ARCHIVES GROUP FROM ATHENS, 11/3/10.

Brief News

Villawood, Australia

Three Chinese men have escaped from Villawood Immigration Detention Centre in Sydney's west by scaling a fence. The escape took place at about 5am on Monday 29th March.

They were able to flee despite extra staff being on duty due to the recent arrival of 89 asylum seekers from Christmas Island.

This escape follows the earlier escape of four detainees from the centre in the past month - including one who hid beneath a truck and another who fled after being allowed out to pray at a nearby church – all of whom were swiftly recaptured.

The three escapees, who had been held at Villawood for between 3 and 6 months, are now being hunted by police and the Immigration Department.

West Bank, Palestine

20th March: 4 Palestinian youths were killed in villages near Nablus.

Mohammed Qaddous, (16 yrs) was killed when he was shot from behind by the Israeli military with live ammunition. Ussayed Qaddous, 19, from the same village of Iraq Burin was also shot in the head with live ammunition and died in hospital several hours later. The young men were shot following a demonstration, where approximately 50 villagers attempted to access land that is under threat from the nearby Israeli settlement of Bracha. It was as the demonstrators retreated into the village after being fired upon by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) that the IOF soldiers followed them into the village and shot the young men.

Shortly afterwards, Muhammed Faysal (19 yrs) and Salah Muhammad Qawariq (16 yrs) were killed in the nearby village of Arwata. Israeli military spokespeople claim that the youths attacked IOF soldiers with pitchforks, and were then shot by the soldiers. Local villagers, however, claim that the young men were killed by Israeli settlers.

Portland, Oregon

Anarchist queers of Portland, alongside other anarchists, spent two nights in the streets confronting police following the police murder of Jack Dale Collins, outside the Hoyt Arboretum.

"In Portland, we express our rage at the murders of the houseless man gunned down on Monday, Aaron Campbell, and Kendra James. We express our rage at the daily targeting of queers by the Portland Police and the queerbashers they enable. We express our rage at the murder of Oscar Grant of Oakland, and the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos of Athens. We express our rage at all murders committed everywhere by police, we express our rage at the very existence of police."

Sydney, Australia

On 14th February, the neo-nazi membership base within the Humanist Society (HS) won a strategic victory for their plan to sell Humanist House in Chippendale, valued at $3 million. They plan to use the money

to fund 'educational' activities and, in the meantime, control the venue as a hub for far-right organising. Mark Pavic, an active member of the Public Information Forum (a front for Klub Naziya/Klub Nation) was made Vice President in the HS committee elections, showing that within the HS there is a strong fascist membership base: around one third of total members plus sympathizers who vote with them.

Absolutely rejecting a political campaign to oust the fascists, the non-far-right members of the HS plan, for the moment, to rely on bureaucratic mechanisms within the HS constitution to redress the Committee election results.

Baradero, Argentina.
21st March: In Baradero, in the province of Buenos Aires, a municipal police patrol that was controlling traffic gave chase to a motorcycle ridden by 2 teenagers, crashing into it. The two young motorcyclists were thrown to the ground and died instantly.

The reaction of the local people, was immediate and led to the burning of the patrol vehicle, the town hall, and the vehicle registry office.

London, UK
Police in the UK are facing a compensation bill of over AUD$400 000 after admitting a raid on the Climate Camp group during the G20 summit in London April 2009 was illegal.

Riot police raided the Earls St squat on 2nd April, breaking up the 60-person Climate Camp meeting, holding activists throughout the operation. Activists who were held are suing the Metropolitan police for damages.

Waihope, New Zealand.
Three men from the Waihope Ploughshares group, Adrian Leason, Father Peter Murnane and Sam Land, who were charged with intentional damage and unlawful entry at Waihope spy base were acquitted on all charges as the jury determined that the ongoing war in Iraq is illegal.

At 6am on the 30th of April 2008, the three men entered the Waihopai spy base and used sickles to deflate one of the two 30 metre domes covering satellite interception dishes. For more info on the trial: www.ploughshares.org.nz

Bristol, UK
17th March: The office of Lloyds private banking in Bristol was attacked. Windows were smashed, and pipes and cables to the building were cut. A plaque with 'Lloyds private banking' was removed from a wall. Walls of the building were sprayed with: 'In the shadow of a dark horse lies a capitalist bailiff', and 'Bankers up against the wall'.

has been lacking; and grassroots social movements are ill-prepared for repression or acts that make collective action more difficult.

Climate activists anticipate a long-term social struggle to change energy sources and reduce carbon pollution. The state, too, is preparing for a climate movement to grow over the coming decades – and possibly for significant backlash as people experience the impacts of climate change – by moving to foreclose space for dissent.

Clearly, campaigns about climate change cannot simply be about changing energy sources or reducing carbon pollution. In the wake of the Copenhagen climate talks, German activist Tadzio Mueller said, "In the context of the escalating climate crisis as well as the total (albeit expected) failure of governments to deal with the problem, we absolutely *have to* (be able to) take disobedient, illegal actions: to shut down coal-fired power plants, new nuclear plants, or socialise the renewable energy sector."

But for any dissenting actions to be at all feasible, we need to organise together to resist and delegitimise repression and increased police powers – and not just new laws that target climate activists, but also those designed to control and criminalise working class, indigenous and migrant communities. We need resourced, broad and sustained support for people who face huge penalties for taking action at coal-fired power stations. We need to better prepare as we collectively mobilise against 'major events' – and as police numbers and new offences endlessly multiply – we need to find new and more creative ways of campaigning.

For a more detailed analysis of the *Major Events Act*, or to organise with us against increasing repression, email us at **foesydney@gmail.com**

A salutation to Lambros.

Lambros Fontas, a Greek anarchist, was murdered by police on the 10th of March. Below is a eulogy to him and what he stood for.

The struggle of those who fight against all forms of power, who are anxious that each moment should not be wasted and who stubbornly maintain the belief that we are capable of creating a free and non-authoritarian world, is as distant from any kind of mythology or fiction as the earth is from the moon.

This struggle has had, has and will have countless casualties; dead, captured, and people who desist because they lose hope or compromise themselves because the powers that be have found the low or high price to buy them off.

Those seeking saints, martyrs or messiahs, or heroes and mythical beasts, are ultimately no different from those who do not miss the opportunity to point the finger at the scoundrels, the black sheep, the criminally suspect and those who politically have already lost. Both the superior beings depicted by one side and the extremist creatures from the other are equally expendable. In either case the purpose is to keep everyone sedated and docile, despite what the proponents of either side might claim.

Some ecstatically speak of those 'sacrificed', while the others piously try to measure the political loss. It is of little importance whether this convergence is achieved due to fanaticism or delusion, ignorance or expediency, for reasons of political visibility and survival or practicing dogmatism. Those who are supposed to object shout to convince everyone that they have unfinished business with them, but this fraud is difficult to conceal. But so be it. This scenario is true and played to death, but the beaten path is always the most secure. Always? Or maybe it is not?

The following words, and those preceding them, are not the product of an obligation or sense of duty. Nor are they part of any revolutionary

The new NSW *Major Events Act* strongly resembles the provisions of the *APEC Meeting (Police Powers) Act*, rapidly passed in 2007, giving police wide powers to establish road blocks, search people and vehicles, seize and detain prohibited items, and exclude people from the specified zones in Sydney's CBD. During the APEC period, the then NSW Police Minister David Campbell could order large 'declared areas' which were not open to challenge. Campbell said the act created 'extraordinary policing powers that will be available temporarily' and 'represent a departure from normal policing powers.'

The *Major Events Act 2009*

What constitutes a 'major event' is not explicitly defined and largely left to the discretion of the Minister. The Minister also declares the 'major event venue' – which could include the event location, any hotel accommodation, transport, public areas, and potentially multiple suburbs of Sydney – all without the scrutiny of Parliament. The *Act* then creates expanded 'controlled areas', restricting signs and advertising, and banning people from distributing 'prescribed articles' without approval, which could include information about protests.

A range of ordinary public activities are banned in these areas:

- Messages on signs, billboards, banners, and placards larger than a square metre;
- Using any audio, broadcasting equipment or camera for a commercial purpose (such as corporate media journalists and photographers covering protest events);
- Operating a sound-generating device (could include a public address system); and
- Conducting, or participating in, any activity in a manner that 'unduly interferes with the amenity of the area' (which could certainly include public protests).

Entire 'categories of persons' can be prohibited from entering a major event venue, or the entire venue can be closed to the public – this could be a significant area. Disturbingly, people can be directed to leave a 'major event venue' if an 'authorised officer' believes on 'reasonable grounds' a person 'is about to contravene a provision of this *Act* or the regulations'. If they don't leave, they may be removed, with reasonable force.

The permanency of these 'extraordinary policing powers' is a worrying constraint on the rights to freedom of expression and assembly. In the context of APEC, the operation of the laws meant the very act of exercising these rights, in practice, became an act of civil disobedience. Turning protest into civil disobedience *per se* is a key risk of this new legislation.

What next?

We have witnessed a spectacular expansion of police powers in the last decade: from the deliberate criminalisation of specific protest methods; to broadly banning a range of dissent against major events; to the creation of 'emergency powers' to control any public 'disorder.' Broadly, a critical examination of the stealthy swell of police powers

My journey to getting a 'sex not specified' legal document

by norrie mAy-welby

Once upon a time, our religion and race was recorded in our legal identification, but society has moved on. Once upon a time, a woman's courtesy title had to show whether she was the property of her father or her husband, but society has moved on.

We tend to see the social rules we inherit as unchangeable, but they do change, as society comes to value each person equally without prejudice based on race or marital status or sexuality or sex .

There is no reason for still insisting that our legal identity must include a public statement about a very private matter, our sex.

Having gender markers as part of our legal identity is a problem for everyone facing gender discrimination, and anyone who does not fit the standard options of male or female.

Not everyone does, you know, with one in a thousand people being born with an intersex condition, and other people of sex or gender diversity, such as transsexuals in transition, or bigendered people who may identify as either male or female or both, according to the situation or time of day.

While many transsexuals may prefer to identify as whichever of the two standard sex options they see as appropriate, many other people of sex or gender diversity, and also many non-transgendered women, would prefer to not have sex listed as part of their legal identity.

It may be problematic, embarrassing or simply allow for sex based discrimination, which we've had enough of.

Whether I am seen as a man or as a woman or both or neither is different for many people.

I don't see myself as absolutely one or the other; although I may use the ladies loos for convenience, I use the men's change rooms at the pool if I am with gay male friends.

I was once a boy, before being first chemically then physically castrated, and had my penis fashioned into a vagina over twenty years ago. But I haven't taken hormones for about 20 years, preferring my body and brain to be as they are naturally without being dependent on externally supplied hormones or plastic implants, happy to be androgynous and to be seen as such. I bond with female friends as a female, I bond with gay friends as a fellow queen.

Guys hung up on gender difference don't have much to do with me, and guys who are less hung up may occasionally hook up with me!

For many people, one of the benefits of growing old is becoming more comfortable with yourself and not suffering so much from a relentless comparison with some usually gendered standard of beauty or strength or whatever.

For me, that has meant accepting myself as I am, and rejecting the idea of fitting other people's gender stereotypes, or even the idea that I have to identify as a man or as a woman.

Those concepts, man or woman, just don't fit me, they are not my actual reality, and, if applied to me, they are fiction. At 48 years of age, I'm less inclined to just humour other people's delusions about gender and try and conform to one of their expected options.

If I need to show identity documents, I certainly don't want details that are false, for this will only cause trouble when officials realise I don't match my documents.

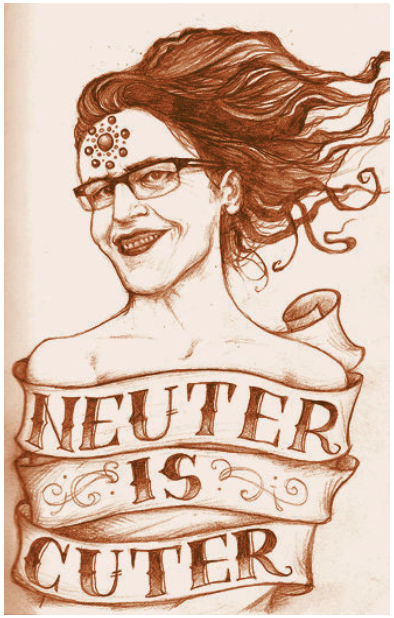
If my passport, for example, states that I am female, I may be detained when travelling if the local jurisdiction classes me based on the gender assigned at birth, or if my physically noticeable masculine aspects (for example, my Adam's apple, or my broad chest) are noticed.

If the passport states male, again there is a dissonance with my physical form, castration having had a feminising effect, and I am

usually moving and talking in a feminine manner.

Stating my sex as male or as female makes the statement false, which is not acceptable for legal identity documentation, and puts me in danger of detention and assault.

The simplest solution is simply to not have any sex identification on my legal documentation, and so I asked the NSW Register of Births Deaths and Marriages to issue me with a Recognition of Details certificate that didn't state my sex as male or female.



After supplying them with appropriate medical documentation of my reproductive sex being neuter and my anatomy being not specifically male or female, and after they first told me it couldn't possibly be done and then took some time to consider the matter and consult their authorities, they issued me with a certificate stating my sex as "Not Specified".

I've never felt completely male or female, except for a brief period in early transition, when I first identified as a transsexual because I thought there were only two gender options and male was wrong and female felt better.

Apart from those few brief years where I shared the delusions of transsexual medicine, in which so many doctors are convinced everyone has a core identity either male or female, I have always been androgynous.

When I was a little boy, which wasn't very often... no, really, I didn't think of myself often as a boy, instead having fantasies about being a jungle girl, or a good witch or a female genie. Many of the things denied to me were permitted to girls - I wanted to play with dolls, skip and dance, and wear ribbons in my hair. It did not occur to me I shouldn't have fantasies about being a girl because I was actually a boy. I wrapped my school tie around my head in private and pretended I had long hair.

When I went through puberty I tried to adopt a story that was more acceptable to the gender-divided adult world, and my female characters were distilled into one character, who was actually the boy hero who had been changed by a witch, and after she defeated the witch, she was a he again. That didn't last long, and soon the two characters, male and female, coexisted in my head, and had adventures together.

At university freedom of expression was encouraged, so I became more flamboyant, mixing frilly girl's blouses with tight boys jeans, and having a very androgynous presentation. When I joined the public service after uni, I faced serious discrimination for being androgynous, and had a nervous breakdown.

At this time, I was also doing drag shows in a gay hotel, receiving adulation for my femininity, rather than the disapprobation this received by those in the public service who sought to sack me for sissiness, and resolved to resolve my gender ambiguity by taking transsexual medicine and surgery.

Two years after swapping my penis for a vagina, I decided to go off hormones, so that I could experience my "natural" self, my body and mind without externally supplied hormones. I also wanted to get in touch with those aspects of myself that had been labeled unladylike, such as the desire to climb trees. I devoured feminist therapeutic texts, liberated myself from sexist stereotypes, and discovered my uncensored unafraid self to be

After APEC: policing protests of Major Events in NSW

By Zoë and Holly, Friends of the Earth Sydney Collective

Late in October 2009, the *Major Events Act 2009* was passed quietly in New South Wales Parliament. It received little Parliamentary discussion or public attention. The NSW Government claimed to be using garden-variety 'uniform provisions' from legislation controlling previous events to 'increase transparency, certainty and consistency' for major events.

But these 'uniform provisions' are drawn from extraordinary and controversial pieces of legislation, which expanded police powers and seriously curtailed civil liberties for 'one-off' events. Many of the overly-broad and draconian legislative provisions are now on the books permanently. In NSW Parliamentary discussion about the *Major Events Bill 2009*, no-one acknowledged a major event could be a 'political event' or even the target of protest – politicians preferring instead to stick to sporting events.

The NSW *Major Events Act 2009* comes from a dirty history of controlling, over-policing, and marginalising dissent around large events. On the eve of the 2000 Olympic Games, NSW Premier Bob Carr said people have a right to protest, but anyone impeding the Games would "see out the Olympics period enjoying the splendid comfort of the Central Industrial Prison at Long Bay".

A year later, the NSW Government began a 'hearts-and-minds' media campaign before protests against the 2002 Sydney meeting of the WTO, attempting to steer public perception of protest and policing. Then NSW Police Minister Michael Costa claimed a single, anonymous comment on an open news website as evidence protesters were "arming for violent confrontation" to "take control of our streets".

Academic Jude McCulloch believes these 'hearts and minds' campaigns against protesters are a vital element of the 'modern day police strategy'. She says, in the lead up to the protests, police will "vilify protestors in order to create a climate that attempts to justify any future violence against them".

During the 2007 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting, Sydney was represented by politicians, police and the press as a city in 'lock-down', awash with protestors 'intent on violence'. *The Daily Telegraph* predicted "mayhem involving every major protest group in Sydney [causing] mass CBD disruption". Police warned parents they could not guarantee the safety of their children. Politicians created a new public holiday and urged Sydney-siders to flee. Police Minister Campbell justified the new police powers with a generic statement, rather than reference to evidence: "We have all seen footage of extremely violent and organised protestors who engage in planned attacks on police, destroy property and terrify the public."

over wages and conditions as a guerrilla war in which workers fought the 'effects' of the capitalist system rather than the system itself. Capitalists tend to depress wages and conditions in favour of profits and workers resist these 'encroachments,' however resistance purely on this basis goes nowhere except a seemingly perpetual back-and-forth. Marx argued that workers should rather fight both these effects and *simultaneously* try to change the system:

> Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wages system!" - *Marx, Karl, 'Wages, Price and Profit' [1865]*

Anything short of a revolutionary contestation merely accepts the capitalist system of wages, prices and profit as a *fait accompli*, a status quo that could be argued over but never changed.

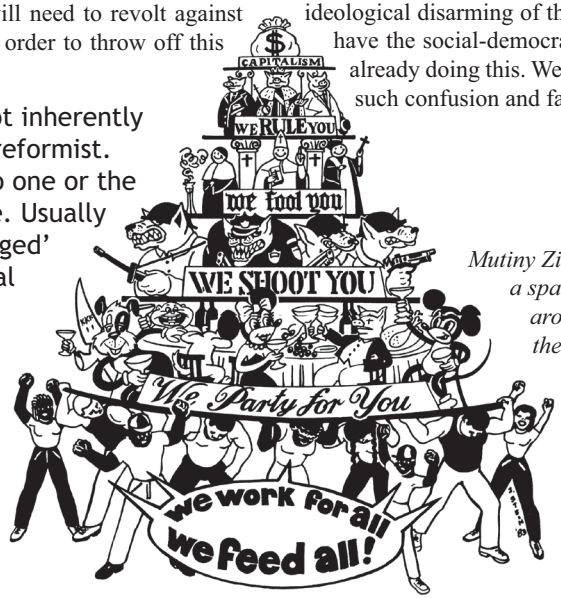
The rejection of the wage relation is the basis for a universal claim that no one should be reduced to mere means for profit. It is the potential *rejection* of being mere wage labour that makes the working class potentially revolutionary, not the fact they are workers for capital. The essence of trade unions is the acceptance of the wage relation as both the cause and end of their existence. Workers will need to revolt against unions and capital in order to throw off this shit.

4. Workers are not inherently revolutionary or reformist. They are 'won' to one or the other perspective. Usually they are 'disengaged' from such political perspectives.

Workers are potentially revolutionary. However to argue that workers are essentially 'disengaged' is merely to surreptitiously argue that workers are dominated by bourgeois ideology. What makes workers potentially revolutionary is the antagonistic nature of wage labour in capitalist society. We are forced to alienate our ability to be active – to work – and sell this capacity to capitalists in order to simply live. Hence Marx made the critique of the commodity, in particular the transformation of labour into a commodity, into the centrepiece of his critique of capital. It is because we have analysed the historical conditions of wage labour, their transitory and unnecessary nature, that we can argue that the working class is potentially revolutionary. Why so? Because they are the only class of people that can transform their 'particular' concerns as workers fighting for better wages and conditions into a 'universal' struggle against wage-labour and the entire system that transforms all of human life and production into so many commodities for sale and profit.

In conclusion: we need to encourage any sign of workers wanting to break from all types of alienating representations, whether unions or political organisations. If we make confused arguments, such as 'unions are in essence revolutionary' whilst simultaneously we experience unions as representational organisations actually being anything but revolutionary, then we contribute to the ideological disarming of the working class. We have the social-democrats and the Leninists already doing this. We need to fight against such confusion and false arguments.

Anthony Hayes
Canberra



Mutiny Zine is keen to provide a space for further debate around the role (or lack thereof) of trade unions in revolutionary struggle. Email your 1500 word article, brief news, or 250 word review to **mutineers[at]graffiti[dot]net**

thoroughly androgynous.

I began writing and critiquing the sexist assumptions inherent in transsexual medicine, and identified as psychologically hermaphrodite.

That was nearly two decades ago, and I have become very comfortable being androgynous rather than female or male, and less tolerant of pretending to have a normative gender so as not to disturb others' preconceptions.

When I censor my being to please others, this causes violence to my soul. I have cut my penis and balls off; the cutting stops there; I don't want to cut another part of myself off to avoid conflict.

Allowing the cutting to continue, putting a normative gender on every form that only gives two options, is death by a thousand cuts to my soul.

Speaking out as an androgynous human, I have found much support, both from those who value diversity and humanity, and from those who also like to express themselves in androgynous or gender-bending ways.

Queer conferences starting with Queer Collaborations in the early nineties encouraged me to run workshops breaking down polarised gender and embracing sex and gender diversity. Being on the board of the Gender Centre and working for the Sex Workers Outreach Project's Transgender Project made me aware that I wasn't the only person diagnosed transsexual who was happier blurring the gender lines rather than always conforming to only one gender.

There seemed no sense in having such a changeable and transient quality as gender nailed down as a permanent mark on identity documents.

SAGE (Sex and Gender Education) Australia, a group lobbying against all discrimination against people for being sex or gender diverse, has been supportive of my androgyny and my goal to have my reality recognised or at least not contradicted by the legal structures of society. SAGE is part of the international movement of people seeking to remove unfair discrimination from social structures.

There may be many who have never thought of there being possibilities other than being male or female, there may be many who think their rules for gender and sexuality come from some tribal god whose traditions must be defended with violence, but there are also many who support the right of each human to express themselves honestly, who would allow children to be who they are, without disciplining them to conform to gender stereotypes, and who can deal with me as an adult without having to be sure what form my genitals are or what history they have or what I do with them in private.

I am grateful that at least the state of New South Wales is able to deal with me on such an adult basis, without needing to specify my sex as male or female, and to issue me with legal identification with sex not specified.

It surprised me to be told I am the first to get such documentation, but I know I won't be the last.

Norrie (who is known under the artistic signature: norrie mAy-welby) is a sex and gender diverse activist based in Sydney, Australia.

On the eve of the Mardi Gras parade, norrie was issued a Recognised Details Certificate that stated 'no sex specified' from NSW Births, Deaths and Marriage. This was the first of its kind in the world, until March 16 when norrie was contacted by the registry to announce that the Atterney General's Office had decided to invalidate the certificate in favour of one stating 'sex: not supplied' as a result of media coverage. After the revocation of the decision a complaint was lodged with the Human Rights Commission on March 18 against the NSW Attorney-General's Office. Check out norrie's blog [http://may-welby.blogspot.com/] for updates. To sign the on-line petition go to http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/norrie/.

Pro-revolutionaries & trade unions

Recently comrades in Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra and Melbourne have been attempting to establish a workers' solidarity network. The intention of the network is to assist workers in struggle to victory, particularly in helping to establish solidarity with other workers and groups outside particular workplaces and trade unions engaged in these struggles.

During the set-up of this network an argument has developed in regards to the nature of working class self-organisation. In particular I have argued that comrades should not be involved in trade unions, and that we should not view trade unions as examples of working class self-organisation *against* capital. Rather trade unions are emblematic of one way that capital organises labour – obviously there are other ways that capital organises labour from more 'democratic' methods right through to terroristic and dictatorial methods. In essence my point was to clarify that *working class self-organisation against capital* and *trade unions* are not synonymous.

To be fair to those I argued against I will attempt to present the main points of their argument and deal with each point in turn.

1. Capitalists fear trade unions

This argument confuses trade unions with something that all capitalists do genuinely fear: working class self-organisation against capital. A good way of illustrating this point is to examine how trade unions act when the threat of workers organising outside and against trade unions arise.

Currently in Greece we are seeing levels of working class militancy the like of which has not been seen in 'Western' countries for some years. However the big trade union confederations have been crucial in stifling the development of working class militancy against capital. Before, during, and after they called two one-day general strikes in late February and early March of this year, the public and private sector umbrella union confederations have been deeply entwined with the social-democratic government that is pushing through harsh austerity legislation against workers. Now, it's one thing to argue that the working class base *pushed* these confederations into action, and another to argue that these confederations called the general strikes in order to *channel* working class anger and despair into an ineffectual dead-end. Certainly the trade union confederations have moved to keep particular strikes and occupations of workers isolated and clearly under the control of their particular trade union leaderships – witness the recent government printers' wildcat strike *against the printing of austerity legislation* that was heavily and successfully policed by those workers' particular trade union bureaucracy. Simultaneously the confederations have attempted to 'represent' working class anger in single day spectacles that allow the trade union bureaucrats to demonstrate that they are 'doing something' for their membership while they're also in cahoots with the state in planning the implementation of the austerity legislation.

Capitalists do not fear trade unions; rather they often need trade unions precisely when working class struggle is in danger of leaping from economic struggles over wages and conditions to struggles contesting the wage relation and the ongoing existence of capitalism – as is the case presently in Greece. To imagine that there is a 'maximal' capitalist perspective that favours dictatorial rule and the naked exploitation of workers without any mediate forms – such as trade unions – is to trade in abstraction. Capitalists fear working class self-organisation against capital, and have often been in favour of trade unions as both a stop to working class struggle and as an important part of capitalist restructuring.

Western capitalism rebuilt itself in the 1940s and 50s with the connivance and cooperation of trade unions. Trade unions helped to save and restructure capitalism in the 1970s and 80s. There is nothing essentially 'anti-trade unionist' about the capitalist perspective. This would be akin to imagining that social-democratic politics are in essence 'anti-capitalist' or that 18th and 19th century *laissez-faire* ideology is the essence of capitalism. The latter certainly is the belief of many socialists and anarchists; they view the apparent changes in capitalist social organisation as evidence of working class victories against naked capitalist exploitation. It is beyond the limits of this article to go into this argument in depth. However I will say that this is to misapprehend what is the *essence* of capitalist social organisation. And that essence has been the preservation of alienated labour-power for sale as the basis of the production and reproduction of the capital relation *by any means necessary*. These 'means' take us through the highs and lows of social-democratic 'betrayals'; Leninist-Stalinist state capitalism; Nazi counter revolution; union negotiated productivity deals; and liberal democratic mass consumption.

2. Thus the ongoing existence of trade unions is in itself an important victory for the working class.

Trade unions have their origins in working class self-organisation. And yet there is a chasm of years and the changing composition of the class struggle that separate us from the unions that were organised in the heat of struggle and the bureaucratically run behemoths of today that have little practical memory of these origins.

Many on the left argued that the pyrrhic victory of the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) dispute of 1998 was just such a victory for the principle of trade unionism. However the MUA dispute is emblematic of the very backward, and indeed functional role unions provide for capital. On the one hand the union was preserved; on the other hand the union presided over the very job cuts and reorganisation of work on the docks that the Howard government and the stevedoring bosses demanded. In fact the union leadership went into this struggle outraged that the stevedoring company and the state wanted to sidestep its role as mediator between capital and labour. When victory was won by the mass mobilisation of waterside workers and their supporters, the union returned to what it did best: organising workers for capital, even if this meant accepting over 700 sackings that the bosses were pushing for from the outset. In this case – as in most cases involving unions – the logic of capital is accepted precisely because this logic is the horizon of union struggle, the horizon of wages, conditions, and being 'economically responsible.'

3. Within every trade union a power struggle goes on between the membership and the hierarchy. On the one hand trade unions are emblematic of working class self-organisation. On the other hand the trade union bureaucrats compromise with management and the state. In fact the 'official' bureaucratic union structure is a perversion of their revolutionary 'truth' or 'potential.'

The working class are potentially revolutionary; trade unions are not, they are merely one type of organisation that workers form to represent their struggle for better wages and conditions.

Without doubt trade unions in the 18th and 19th century in Britain and Europe were expressions of working class self-organisation. However with a few notable exceptions – e.g. the Chartists in Britain prior to 1848 – trade unions have always been the expression of workers' attempts to gain better wages and conditions; that is, they are expressions of the working class on the terms of the capitalist wage relation, and not expressions of a working class against capital.

Certainly trade unions sometimes seem to be caught between the mass democratic base and the bureaucratic leadership. However as a unity of this antagonistic relationship, they do not escape their primary role: the representation of workers as workers in their struggle for better wages and conditions.

In a series of lectures published as *Wages, Price and Profit* Karl Marx characterised the struggle